(d) if so, what steps Government are taking to avoid a possible explosive situation?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU): (a) The Supreme Court in Civil Writ Petition No. 202 of 1995 vide order dated 12.12.1996 has ordered that in the Tropical Wet Evergreen Forests of Tirap and Changlang in the State of Arunachal Pradesh, there would be a complete ban on felling of any kind of trees therein because of particular significance to maintain ecological balance needed to preserve biodiversity.

The Court has also ordered that all saw mills, veneer mills and plywood mills in Tirap and Changlang in Arunachal Pradesh and within a distance of 100 km. from its border in Assam be closed immediately. The Court has also directed that notwithstanding the closure of any saw mill or other wood-based industry pursuant to this order, the workers employed in such unit will be continuing to be paid their full emoluments due and shall not be retrenched or removed from service for this reason.

(b) There are a good number of employment generation schemes including self-employment schemes financed by Government of India and the State Governments are at liberty to utilise such schemes to provide alternative means of employment to youths, whose traditional means of livelihood are affected, if any, by the interim Order of the Supreme Court.

(c) No such report has been received so far by the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment.

(d) Question does not arise.

Dredging in Hooghly River

96. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to safeguard navigational safety measures in Hooghly rivers by dredging the Hooghly river;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the project is likely to start to protect the ports?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) to (c) Regular maintenance dredging of Hooghly river is being done by the Calcutta Port Trust through Dredging Corporation of India and through their own dredgers. Apart from dredging, river training works have also been done/planned to be done by the Port to stabilise the channel and improve the depths.

Construction of highway corridors

97. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to construct highway corridors on the golden quadrilateral along the west coast;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the budget and funding proposals; and

(c) by when the job would be taken up?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) No, Sir. West Coast Road is not proposed to be improved together with the golden quadrilateral.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Development, upgradation and strengthening of surface transport in Jharkhand region

98. SHRI GYAN RANJAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated new strategy for development, upgradation and strengthening, of surface transport infrastructure in the country and particularly in the backward regions in Bihar to facilitate faster economic

growth of the backward regions during the 9th Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the details of the action plan for infrastructure development for backword regions in the country in general and Jharkhand region in particular; and

(c) the details of the projects identified and estimated cost thereof, project-wise and whether Government have identified the proposals for private investments/ participations and if so, the details thereof in respect of Jharkhand region?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) to (c) The 9th Five Year Plan has not been finalised as yet. The strategy for development of transport infrastructure would depend on size of the plan to be approved by the Planning Commission. It is too early at this stage to identify projects and proposals for private participation.

As regards development of National Highways in Jharkhand region in Bihar, works costing nearly Rs. 173.75 crores including the fourlanning at a cost of Rs. 127.89 crores in a length of 43 Km. on NH-2 are in different stages of progress. Further there is provision of Rs. 12.00 crore in Annual Plan 1997-1998 for development of National Highways in Jharkhand region in Bihar.

Service Tax on road transport sector

99. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) what is the average freight per vehicle per year;

(b) the average number of vehicles on the road per year;

(c) what are the reasons that Government failed to levy Service Tax on road transport sector and thus losing potential revenue to the tune of Rs. 7500 crore and its possible deployment for road infrastructure;

(d) whether the Indian Foundation of Transport Research and Training has recommended that the Service Tax should be collected from 50 thousand transport companies; and

(e) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha.

राजमार्गों के लिए विश्व बैंक से सहायता

100. **श्रीमती मालती शर्मा:** क्या जल-भूतल परिवहन मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार देश में राजमार्गों को चौड़ा करने तथा इनकी दशा में सुधार करने के लिए विश्व बैंक से सहायता लेने पर विचार कर रही है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(ग) राजमार्गों के सुधार के लिए विश्व बैंक से ऐसी सहायता पहले कब प्राप्त की गई थी तथा प्राप्त की गई सहायता का ब्यौरा क्या है?

जल-भूतल परिवहन मंत्री (श्री टी.जी. वेंकटरामन): (क) और (ख) भारतीय राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग प्राधिकरण ने दिल्ली से कलकत्ता और चेन्नई से मदुरै के लिए मार्गों के बारे में व्यवहार्यता अध्ययन किया है। तदुपरान्त, ये परियोजना ऋण सहायता के लिए विश्व बैंक के पास भेजी जाएंगी।

(ग) पिछली बार विश्व बैंक से द्वितीय राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग परियोजना (उड़ीसा में राज्यीय सड़कों पर 6 पुलों के पुनर्निर्माण सहित) के लिए जून, 1992 में 306 मिलियन-अमरीकी डालर की ऋण सहायता पर हस्ताक्षर हुए थे। यह ऋण जून, 2001 में समाप्त होगा।

Changes in Nattional shipping Policy

101. PROF. NAUNIHAL SINGH: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some changes have been made in the National Shipping Policy;

(b) if so, what are its salient features;